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A NEW COMBINATION IN *GORDONIA* (THEACEAE)

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ABSTRACT

The name *Laplacea brenesii* Standl. (Theaceae) is confirmed as a synonym of *L. grandis* Brandegee, the latter replaced by *G. brandegeei* H. Keng, nom. nov. (not *G. grandis* André 1880). As a consequence, *Gordonia brenesii* (Standl.) Q. Jiménez, comb. nov. (here validated), must replace *G. brandegeei* as the accepted name for the species involved.
KEY WORDS: *Gordonia*, *Laplacea*, Theaceae

Laplacea grandis Brandegee (1915: 186) is the earliest known name for an arborescent species of Theaceae ranging throughout the Mesoamerican region, and was used as the accepted name in the most recent taxonomic revision in which that species was included (Kobuski 1950). The same species was treated in full under the name *L. grandis* in the *Flora of Panama* (Robyns 1967), and mentioned by that name in the *Flora of Guatemala* (Standley & Williams 1961: 32). However, in uniting *Laplacea* Kunth (in Humboldt et al., 1822: 207) with *Gordonia* J. Ellis (1771: 520), Keng (1980: 310) replaced *L. grandis* with a nomen novum, *Gordonia brandegeei* H. Keng, citing *G. grandis* André (1880: 60) as a blocking name. The name *Gordonia brandegeei* has since been employed as an accepted name in at least one major floristic treatment (Pool 2001), several regional checklists (e.g., Correa et al. 2004; Linares 2005), and many herbaria.

Keng's (1980) new names and combinations for New World species almost certainly did not involve any original taxonomic work but rather were based on Kobuski's (1950) revision, which was duly cited. But Keng did not take into account Kobuski's inclusion of the validly published *Laplacea brenesii* Standl. (1937) in synonymy under *L. grandis*. It seems most likely that Keng believed that a nomen novum assumes the priority of the name it replaces (a common misconception, in our experience). However, it is also possible that Keng simply overlooked this detail, or he rejected *L. brenesii* as a synonym of *L. grandis*; we cannot be certain, because Keng nowhere mentioned the name *L. brenesii*. Nevertheless, it is clear that, if *Laplacea brenesii* is indeed a taxonomic synonym of *L. grandis*, then a combination based on the former name must replace *Gordonia brandegeei* as the correct name for the species in the genus *Gordonia*.

We have examined an image of the holotype specimen (*Brenes 4379*, F) of *Laplacea brenesii* posted by the Field Museum Department of Botany at the following Internet address:

http://emuweb.fieldmuseum.org/botany/vtypeDisplay.php?irn=257085&QueryPage=%2Fbotany%2Fsearch_vtype.php

This image is immediately verifiable by us as depicting the species that has lately been known as *Gordonia brandegeei*. Moreover, the specimen bears a 1991 annotation by Anna L. Weitzman (US), a contemporary Theaceae specialist, recording the same identification. And finally, not wishing to take anything for granted, we have confirmed both of these identifications by examining an image of the holotype of *Laplacea grandis* (*Purpus 7092*, UC), posted by the UC and JEPS herbaria at the following Internet address:

http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/cgi-bin/display_smasch_img.pl?smasch_accno=UC174218

We therefore conclude that *Laplacea brenesii* is indeed a taxonomic synonym of *L. grandis*, as originally indicated by Kobuski (1950). The combination of the former name in *Gordonia* is thus validated below, and the consequent synonymy is formalized.

Gordonia brenesii (Standl.) Q. Jiménez, comb. nov. Basionym: *Laplacea brenesii* Standl., Publ. Field Mus. Nat. Hist., Bot. Ser. 18(2): 701. 1937. **TYPE**: **Costa Rica**. [Alajuela:] Los Ángeles de San Ramón, 1050 m, 21 Aug 1925, *A.M. Brenes 4379* (holotype: F-852413, image!; IT: CR).

Gordonia brandegeei H. Keng, Gard. Bull. Singapore 33: 310. 1980. Replaced name: *Laplacea grandis* Brandegee, Univ. Calif. Publ. Bot. 6: 186. 1915 (non *Gordonia grandis* André, 1880: 60). **TYPE**: **Mexico**. Chiapas. Finca Mexiquito, Jul 1913, *C.A. Purpus 7092* (holotype: UC-174218, image!).

It should be emphasized that, although we now regard *Gordonia brandegeei* H. Keng as a synonym of *G. brenesii*, the former name is not illegitimate, because Keng (1980) did not explicitly include *Laplacea brenesii* as a synonym. Thus the name *G. brandegeei* remains available and could theoretically come back into use, were the types of *Laplacea brenesii* and *L. grandis* judged to represent different species.

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